

MEMORANDUM

To: Alisa N. Benedict O'Brien, Board Liaison
Cc: Fred Thrasher, Deputy Director
From: Shawn Beem and Lauren Jackson, Co-Chairs, Law School CSO Chief Officers Interest Group
Date: October 2024
Re: Second Quarter Board Report, NALP Law School CSO Chief Officers Interest Group

OCTOBER INTEREST GROUP MEETING

Approximately 30 people attended our one-hour meeting on October 9, 2024. We were happy to have NALP President-Elect Alison Ashe-Card join us briefly to thank everyone for their time and commitment to the NALP community.

PRE-RECRUITMENT & "FALL OCI"

Most of the meeting focused on pre-recruitment. Across the board, most CSO chiefs agreed that the 2024 recruiting season was a hard and long experience for CSO staff and students. Here are some of the comments:

- Students struggled with 9 months of recruiting – they are tired and burned out. (So are CSO staffs.)
- The numerous ways to apply to firms impacted how CSOs advised students. It was confusing and challenging.
- Impacting how to collect data about hiring outcomes.
 - Employers aren't reporting hires to schools.
- One school reported summer 2025 offers as early as February 2024.
- OCI participation shrunk across schools overall. Schools reported that employers with scheduled OCI dates ultimately canceled those dates due to hiring in May or June.
 - Schools reported that students didn't always apply to pre-recruitment portals because the employer was also scheduled to come on campus. When the employer canceled the visit, the student missed out. Concerned about the number of well-qualified students who were disadvantaged.
 - Schools didn't know that the employer would cancel. Made advising a challenge.
- Some schools found that pre-recruitment harmed diverse students.
- Some schools found that students turned down mid-sized firms hoping to get an offer from a large firm then lost out when no other offers came through.
- Some raised concerns about student participation in law review/journals (and moot court/mock trial) if they no longer need the credential for hiring.
- CSOs are now worrying about earlier and earlier recruiting efforts.
 - Schools are also receiving increased employer requests to visit their law schools this fall and early spring 2025. Running out of options/times for employers.
 - Schools are enhancing coaching and time management programs to help 1Ls plan for a long recruitment season for summer 2025 and 2026.
 - Encouraging students to make earlier and earlier connections with employers and to apply as early as possible.

- Students need to attend all events and network. Can no longer be a wallflower with strong credentials and get hired.
- Schools are telling current 1L (class of 2027) students to apply early for both summer 2025 and 2026.
- It was reported that some NY firms have indicated that they will not participate in any traditional school-sponsored OCI programs.
- Some schools reported receiving this fall job postings for summer 2026.

As schools see early recruitment efforts from employers or learn that employers will no longer participate in traditional “Fall OCI,” schools are experimenting with changes.

- Some schools are offering late May/early June resume collections.
- Duke announced its virtual interview program will be the week of May 19, 2025 – competing schools aren’t happy.
- One school is moving to a quarterly OCI program.
- A couple of schools are considering not offering traditional OCI programs due to the decrease in employer and student participation – will direct employers to the job board and resume collections.
 - Some expressed concern about the optics of not hosting OCI on admissions.
- One school reported that their dean is giving the CSO more operating dollars for resources and online tools (not personnel) to support advising and coaching.
- Schools are encouraged to update their dean and faculty on this seismic change in recruiting.

ABA INTERVENTION

During the discussion, one CSO chief raised the question of whether the ABA could intervene to provide a standard that would limit such pre-recruitment and thus avoid anti-trust issues. Someone wondered if CSO chiefs should encourage their deans to lobby the ABA proactively.

This idea of an ABA intervention excited many on the call.

As co-chiefs, we acknowledged this idea and indicated that we would call it to the attention of the NALP board. However, we also expressed that the ABA may be reluctant to intervene, as employment outcomes are an important data point for the ABA. This is also true of law schools and their deans. It’s unlikely that law school deans would lobby for a restraint on the recruitment of its students. We also noted that should the ABA propose a standard, we could see that there would be heavy lobbying by firms on their attorneys who are members of the ABA House of Delegates to vote against such a standard.

OTHER TOPICS

We were unable to spend much time on the following questions that were submitted in advance of our meeting:

- Predictive recruiting/AI assessments.
 - Whether CSOs are recommending that students affirmatively complete the predictive recruiting/AI assessments (like Suited) to access BigLaw jobs? So far, I had only heard of students completing the assessment if a firm requested it, but I see that the Suited website allows students to affirmatively submit it, so I was curious whether other CSOs are recommending that students do it, and whether anyone has any concerns about doing that.
- Policies and/or practices with respect to handling job posting requests from employers of concern.

- For example, we sometimes receive troubling reports from students and alumni about employers that go beyond run-of-the-mill complaints. We are struggling to come up with standards to determine when we should decline to post for such an employer, when we might simply counsel a student more carefully, whether and how to keep records, where to store them, etc. We are in the process of trying to revamp our approach and I'd love to hear what other schools are doing.
- NALP's 1L common app.
 - Do we know if firms are going to use it and whether firms are going to post their 1L positions on the NALP site? At the WALRAA meeting last week, I got the sense that law schools know about the NALP efforts in this area but the law firms are not up to speed.

We will explore these questions via NALP Connect and in our next meeting should the topics remain of interest to members.

FUTURE INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS

The quarterly meetings for the Interest Group are set for 3:00 PM Eastern on

- January 16, 2025
- March 6, 2025